

Keisen Associates Tokyo - Musician Drums Up Challenge to JASRAC over Royalty Policy: Licensing Issues

JASRAC, Japanese Society for Rights of Authors, Composers and Publishers, is again facing criticism. Recently it has received pushback from music schools and other establishments that use music, but now [complaints](#) from a musician supposed to benefit from JASRAC's monitoring of music use also is broadcasting his complaints that JASRAC is not clearly or appropriately giving royalties.

JASRAC tries to take a sampling of establishments like karaoke bars and music live houses and distribute general use fees (charged as flat rates to such establishments) as royalties to artists based on how much their songs were performed in the samplings. Rock band drummer Funky Sueyoshi has published his disappointment that he has received none of the royalties in spite of all the performing he had done over ten years and the procedure for distributions is "opaque."

As complaints against JASRAC become public, disgruntlement with it may lead to more people choosing alternative ways of protecting their copyrights. However, for the many people who have entrusted their music to JASRAC's oversight or who use music guarded by it, the problems remain.

It is difficult to monitor uses of any particular song and to apply copyright principles to it. The sampling method that JASRAC uses, unless it were to implement some universal music checking system, is not utterly ridiculous (though maybe it should be refined and

expanded). The fact remains that many songwriters and musicians agree to let JASRAC monitor and charge for use of their songs. Maybe musicians, music-using establishments, and licensing groups need to negotiate a way free from JASRAC while understanding the pressures JASRAC faces. Musicians entering the Japanese market will want to clarify how JASRAC may be involved in playing or performing of their music in Japan. We would hope that going beyond the challenges of today, good music will flourish, not wither, in Japan.